

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 AGR-20 SS-20 NSC-07 SCI-06 STR-08 H-03 L-03

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15

PRS-01 SPC-03 EB-11 COME-00 NSCE-00 (ISO) R

DRAFTED BY EA/PRCM:PTLINCOLN,JR.:EBS

APPROVED BY EA - AWHUMMEL,JR.

USDA/FAS - RJGOODMAN (DRAFT)

EA/PRCM:OVARMSTRONG (DRAFT)

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P R 202302Z MAR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USLO PEKING PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056174

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, CH

SUBJECT: TCK WHEAT SMUT PROBLEM

REFS: A) STATE 54117

B) PEKING 466 AND PREVIOUS

1. DEPT CALLED IN PRCLO OFFICERS TO DISCUSS TCK WHEAT PROBLEM ON MARCH 20. PRCLO HAD ASKED THAT COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR CHANG TSIEN-HUA COME IN INSTEAD OF HAN HSU SINCE CHANG WAS MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE DETAILS OF THIS PROBLEM-- A REQUEST TO WHICH WE ACCEDED. CHANG WAS ACCOMPANIED BY COMMERCIAL OFFICER/INTERPRETER T'UNG CHIH-KUANG. DEPUTY ASST. SECRETARY HUMMEL HOSTED THE MEETING, WHICH INCLUDED ON THE US SIDE RICHARD E. BELL, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND COMMODITY PROGRAMS; RICHARD J. GOODMAN, ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR OF FAS; AND EA/PRCM ECON/COMMERCIAL OFFICER PHILIP T. LINCOLN, JR.

2. HUMMEL OPENED THE MEETING BY INDICATING THAT THE USG
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IS AWARE OF THE TCK PROBLEM AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR

SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE COMMITMENTS TO FACILITATE TRADE, WE ARE ANXIOUS TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO BE OF ASSISTANCE. WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF PROBLEM FOR SOME MONTHS, BUT THIS WAS FIRST GOVT TO GOVT DISCUSSION OF IT. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT ROLE THE USG CAN USEFULLY PLAY IN ACHIEVING A SOLUTION, BUT ARE ANXIOUS TO PLAY SUCH A ROLE IF THERE IS ONE.

BELL SAID THAT THIS IS A SOMEWHAT UNIQUE SITUATION FOR US, SINCE TCK HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN A PROBLEM IN OUR GRAIN TRADE. ALSO, THE US AND THE PRC ARE AMONG THE FEW COUNTRIES WHERE WINTER WHEAT IS GROWN UNDER THE CONTINUOUS SNOW COVER NECESSARY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FUNGUS SPORES. WHEN THE PRC TRADING CORPORATION FIRST RAISED THE PROBLEM WITH OUR SHIPPERS LAST FALL, THE COMPANIES RESPONDED BY CEASING SHIPMENTS TO THE PRC OF TCK-PRONE WHEAT GROWN ON THE WESTERN SLOPE (OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS) AND INSTEAD SHIPPED WHEAT FROM THE EASTERN SLOPE AND MIDWESTERN AREAS OF THE US. WHEN THE TCK CONTAMINATION CONTINUED TO BE FOUND IN SHIPMENTS, THE GRAIN EXPORTERS SHIFTED TO SPRING WHEAT, WHICH SHOULD NOT HAVE THE DISEASE. THE SHIPPERS HAVE BEEN CAREFUL IN SELECTING ONLY WHEAT GROWN IN THE DAKOTAS AND OTHER GREAT PLAINS AREAS FOR SHIPMENT TO THE PRC; WHEN THE GRAIN WAS IN TRANSIT TO SEATTLE AND GULF COAST PORTS IT WAS ISOLATED FROM OTHER SHIPMENTS.

3. HUMMEL NOTED THAT THE USG SUPPORTS THE PROPOSALS MADE BY THE GRAIN SHIPPERS FOR A VISIT TO THE PRC BY A GROUP OF US SCIENTISTS (INCLUDING DR. HOFFMANN) AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FAMILIAR WITH THE GRAIN TRADE. WE WOULD ALSO WELCOME A VISIT TO THIS COUNTRY BY CHINESE TECHNICIANS AND APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS. THE PRC VISITORS COULD OBSERVE GRAIN SHIPPING AND HANDLING PROCEDURES, MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE THE TCK PROBLEM, ETC.

4. CHANG RESPONDED THAT THIS IS NOT A NEW PROBLEM, SINCE IT FIRST AROSE LAST FALL. USDA SHOULD KNOW HOW SERIOUS THE CROP DISEASES ARE; THE 1953 USDA PLANT AND CROP DISEASE YEARBOOK STATED THAT "ONCE A PLANT HAS BEEN

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ATTACKED BY THE DISEASE IT WILL NOT GO AWAY FOR SEVEN YEARS." CHANG SAID THAT SINCE LIBERATION, PLANT DISEASES HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED IN THE PRC AND THAT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY WAS VERY STRICT ON THESE MATTERS AS THEY WERE WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LOWERED YIELDS. CHANG NOTED THAT THE CONTRACTS SIGNED WITH THE GRAIN EXPORTERS SPECIFIED SIX KINDS OF DISEASES AND PESTS WHICH WERE NOT TO BE PRESENT IN THE SHIPMENTS.

THE CONTRACTS ALSO STIPULATED THAT THE US QUARANTINE AUTHORITIES SHOULD CHECK EACH SHIPMENT TO BE SURE THESE DISEASES AND PESTS WERE NOT PRESENT; THE PRC WAS CONCERNED THAT THE QUARANTINE AUTHORITIES HAD FAILED TO DO THEIR JOB PROPERLY. ALTHOUGH NOT ALL US WHEAT SHIPMENTS HAVE HAD TCK, THE CONTAMINATION HAS BEEN A CONTINUING PROBLEM,AND

IN ONE RESPECT SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME MORE SERIOUS LATELY IN THAT IT HAS NOW BEEN DISCOVERED IN SHIPMENTS OF HARD RED WINTER WHEAT WHEREAS TCK HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN FOUND ONLY IN SHIPMENTS OF WHITE WHEAT AND OTHER WHEATS GROWN WEST OF THE ROCKIES. CHANG SAID HE BELIEVED USDA WAS ALSO CONCERNED AND COULD UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM. CHANG CONCLUDED THAT HE WOULD CONVEY BOTH PROPOSALS FOR EXCHANGE OF SPECIALISTS TO HIS GOVERNMENT.

5. HUMMEL REITERATED OUR OFFER TO BE OF ASSISTANCE, AND NOTED THAT THE TWO VISITS WERE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE; A GROUP COULD VISIT THE PRC AND AT THE SAME TIME A CHINESE GROUP COULD COME TO THIS COUNTRY. REFERRING TO CHANG'S REMARKS ABOUT YIELDS, BELL AND GOODMAN SAID THAT WE WOULD OF COURSE BE CONCERNED OVER ANY EFFECT ON YIELD CAUSED BY TCK, BUT OUR SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THEY HAVE TCK UNDER CONTROL IN THIS COUNTRY AND THAT IT IS NOT A YIELD-REDUCING FACTOR.

6. THE MEETING, WHICH LASTED FOR ABOUT A HALF HOUR, WAS RELAXED BUT SERIOUS AND BUSINESSLIKE THROUGHOUT. CHANG WAS OBVIOUSLY WELL-PREPARED ON THE SUBJECT.

7. USLO IS REQUESTED TO SEEK A MEETING WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN CEROILFOOD AND, AT YOUR DISCRETION, THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRIES TO REITERATE
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POINTS MADE TO PRCLO. KISSINGER

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